

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for recovering copper from a copper-containing material comprising:

a reactor, wherein said reactor is suitable for reacting at least a portion of a copper-containing feed stream with at least a portion of a copper-containing lean electrolyte stream in an acidic environment to yield a pressure leaching feed stream comprising a solid copper-bearing precipitate and acid;

a pressure leaching vessel, wherein said pressure leaching vessel is suitable for leaching at least a portion of said pressure leaching feed stream in an oxidizing environment at an elevated temperature and pressure to yield a product slurry comprising a copper-containing solution and a residue;

means for conditioning said product slurry without the use of solvent extraction techniques to yield a copper-containing solution suitable for electrowinning and a residue, wherein said conditioning means comprises means for blending at least a portion of said copper-containing solution with at least a portion of one or more copper-containing streams to achieve a desired copper concentration in said copper-containing solution suitable for electrowinning; and

an electrowinning circuit, wherein said electrowinning circuit is suitable for electrowinning copper from said copper-containing solution to yield cathode copper and a copper-containing lean electrolyte stream; and

means for recycling at least a portion of said copper-containing lean electrolyte stream from said electrowinning circuit to said conditioning means.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1 further comprising a liquid-solid separation circuit, wherein said liquid-solid separation circuit is adapted to separate at least a portion of said solid copper-bearing precipitate from said acid to yield a concentrated pressure leaching feed stream.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said pressure leaching vessel is suitable for leaching at least a portion of said pressure leaching feed stream at a temperature of from about 100°C to about 250°C and at a pressure of from about 50 to about 750 psi.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said reactor is suitable for reacting at least a portion of a copper-containing feed stream with at least a portion of a copper-containing lean electrolyte stream in the presence of sulfur dioxide, whereby at least a portion of said copper in said copper-containing lean electrolyte stream precipitates as copper sulfide onto at least a portion of the copper-containing material in said feed stream..

5. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said means for conditioning said product slurry comprises a liquid-solid separation circuit adapted to separate at least a portion of said copper-containing solution in said product slurry from said residue in said product slurry to yield a copper-containing solution suitable for electrowinning.

6. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said means for conditioning said product slurry comprises means for controlling the copper concentration of said copper-containing solution.

7. (Cancelled).

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Cancelled).

⁷ 10. (Original) The system of claim 1 further comprising means for recycling at least a portion of said copper-containing lean electrolyte stream from said electrowinning circuit to said reactor.

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Cancelled).

⁸ 13. (Currently Amended) A system for recovering copper from a copper-containing material comprising:

means for reacting a copper-containing material stream with a copper-containing lean electrolyte stream to produce an inlet stream comprising a copper-bearing precipitate and acid;

means for leaching at least a portion of said inlet stream to produce a product slurry comprising a copper-containing solution and a residue;

means for conditioning said product slurry without the use of solvent extraction techniques to produce a copper-containing solution acceptable for electrowinning; and

means for electrowinning copper from said copper-containing solution to produce a cathode copper product; and

means for recycling at least a portion of said copper-containing lean electrolyte stream from said electrowinning means to said reacting means, and means for recycling at least a portion of said copper-containing lean electrolyte stream from said electrowinning means to said conditioning means.

⁹ 14. (Original) The system of claim 13 further comprising means for separating at least a portion of said solid copper-bearing precipitate from said acid to yield a concentrated inlet stream.

¹⁰ 15. (Original) The system of claim 13 wherein said leaching means is suitable for leaching at least a portion of said inlet stream in an oxidizing environment at a temperature of from about 100°C to about 250°C and at a pressure of from about 50 to about 750 psi.

¹¹ 16. (Original) The system of claim 13 wherein said reacting means is suitable for reacting at least a portion of said copper-containing material stream with at least a portion of said copper-containing lean electrolyte stream in the presence of sulfur dioxide, whereby at least a portion of said copper in said copper-containing lean electrolyte stream precipitates as copper sulfide onto at least a portion of the copper-containing material in said copper-containing material stream.

¹² 17. (Original) The system of claim 13 wherein said means for conditioning said product slurry comprises a liquid-solid separation circuit adapted to separate at least a portion of said copper-containing solution in said product slurry from said residue in said product slurry to yield a copper-containing solution suitable for electrowinning.

¹³ 18. (Original) The system of claim 13 wherein said means for conditioning said product slurry comprises means for controlling the copper concentration of said copper-containing solution whereby the copper concentration of said copper-containing solution entering said electrowinning circuit is maintained at a level of about 40 grams/liter.

¹⁴ 19. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 13 wherein said means for conditioning said product slurry comprises means for blending at least a portion of said copper-containing solution with at least a portion of one or more copper-containing streams to achieve a desired copper concentration in said copper-containing solution.

20. (Cancelled).